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Greed a spiritual, not social ill, says sem prof

Marian Van Til

BURLINGTON, Ont. — "Public Christianity has fallen on hard times in this Dominion of ours," says Dr. John Bolt, professor of systematic theology at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Bolt is a Canadian who was one of the original seven professors at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ont. He talked about "Greed, Goodness and God: Hope for Canada's Bottom Line" in an evening address on September 25 to those attending a Work Research Foundation (WRF) conference in Burlington. The conference was examining "unchanging faith" in the midst of the modern changing workplace.

Bolt said Canada's "bottom line" is in trouble. But he wasn't



Dr. John Bolt

talking finances but referred instead to a "spiritual, cultural, moral, and, yes, legal" malaise.

He was not referring, he said

pointedly, to "the accommodated, empty, universalist, tolerant, politicized version of Christianity represented by the current moderator of the United Church and loved by the *Globe and Mail*." Instead, "the public legitimacy of orthodox Christianity in Canada today is under serious attack, and Christian public expression ... is under severe political restraint."

Let's talk

Yet, Bolt suggested, there is "a glimmer of something positive... an entry point into the secular wasteland." That entry point is the fact that secular society is now actually discussing greed — of entrepreneurs, corporations, governments, sports teams and individual athletes, and the like.

Bolt contended that "the attack on greed often carries with it its own thinly veiled political agenda." But even so, we should join the chorus of disapproval of greed, "even if we must sing it in a different key." Singing in that different key means that we condemn greed as "a serious spiritual pathology... a vice and a spiritual sickness."

Bolt cited the greed of baseball owners and players as well as the concentration of economic power into fewer and larger financial institutions as both an example of greed and a bad thing for the country's economic freedom.

Bolt noted, though, that greed "needs to be distinguished from simple self-interest." Greed is inordinate or excessive self-interest, "focused on the ac-

cumulation of things for the sake of accumulating things."

Measuring 'how much'

A church which preaches the gospel must address greed according to the "classic wisdom" of the "tradition of Christian soul care," a wisdom many churches and individual Christians are now shunning.

This wisdom is quite different from contemporary uses of greed in the current public discourse, Bolt noted. "[Our society denounces] greed from the quantitative perspective of social justice; we pull out the greed card of moral renunciation when we are overwhelmed by ugly disparities of abject poverty and ostentatious wealth," he said.

See DISPARITIES page 2...

Changed definition of charitable giving threatens Christian school supporters

Alan Doerksen

ELMIRA, Ont. — Gerzinus and Jeanetta Hoekstra, a St. Catharines, Ont., couple, had a rude awakening recently. Revenue Canada sent them a letter saying they owe the government at least \$12,000 in back taxes. It's all part of a crackdown on people who tried to maximize their charitable contribution portion of Christian school tuition by channeling their payments through organizations like Corban.

Because of Revenue Canada's tightening of the application of rules, and a new definition of charitable giving, many other Christians may also get similar bad news.

More than a year ago, Revenue Canada began using a new definition of charitable giving. Now, a gift must be made out of "detached, disinterested generosity."

According to the Canadian Council of Christian Charities (CCCC), this is a major change from the previous legal definition of a charitable gift as a "voluntary transfer of property, without valuable consideration."

Dick Kranendonk, director of stewardship services for CCCC, explains that the "detached" clause is not officially in a Revenue Canada policy statement, but says, "we've seen it in several letters from Revenue Canada." He adds that the

definition is contained, with different words, in a Revenue Canada document.

But Isabel Menard, a spokesperson for Revenue Canada's charitable donation section in Ottawa, described the government's definition of a charitable donation as being "a voluntary transfer of property without any consideration, benefit or material advantage given back to the donor" — a definition similar to the earlier one cited by CCCC.

Revenue Canada's position on charitable donations is spelled out in several bulletins accessible on its Internet website. One recurring theme in these

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Gerzinus and Jeanetta Hoekstra: a rude awakening.



A deeply wounded man searches for love p. 10

Lots of responses to Hart/Wolters pp. 5, 6

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Internet romances and marriages for Christians ... p. 12



News

Disparities should disturb Christians, says Bolt

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"When there are homeless people sleeping on Yonge Street tonight, it scandalizes us that the Rosedale crowd is living it up in corporate boxes in SkyDome watching adult millionaires play children's games. When the photographs of emaciated children with distended bellies assault us from Somalia and Rwanda, we feel guilty about that extra cheese danish we scarfed up at this morning's coffee break."

Wrong task for church

Bolt agreed that these disparities ought to "disturb us, trouble us, make us righteously angry, call forth from us cries for deliverance for the poor."

But are the churches today still applying the Bible's antidote to greed? He asked. "Is it too much to ask the churches of Canada [to] address the question of greed as a problem of the soul rather than as one more lobbying group (with proof-texts) pleading for yet one more version or other of wealth redistribution?"

The latter, he asserted, has been the pattern in mainline Christianity: "Say nothing about souls and much about economics."

For both the good of Canada and our own salvation, Bolt believes the pattern must be reversed, for two reasons. First, "the salvation of souls is the church's proper business. If the

church doesn't tell Canadians that their empty souls are being offered stones for bread by political schemes, and that only the Bread of Life can satisfy their heart's deepest longing, while idols of Mammon will destroy them; if the church doesn't tell them that, who will?"

Second, when churches endorse trying to solve greed by redistributing wealth, they only worsen the problem of "empty souls" and idolatry by "nurturing another of the seven deadly sins: envy."

Bolt's point was that "the church's role here is not to play surrogate economics professor, but to stick to its own task." And then, Christians in economics,

political science, international banking and relief and development positions must be called upon to do their jobs, "always keeping in mind the demands of justice and love."

Decay — or sin?

Bolt points out that it is instructive that one of the favorite metaphors used in the "numerous and sweeping overviews of our society and civilization" is an organic one: we speak of societies being born, decaying and dying. As the great British Catholic poet G.K. Chesterton said, "Our fathers said a nation is sinning, like a man; we moderns say it is decaying, like a cheese."

But this is not the way the

Bible speaks of nations, as Herb Schlossberg pointed out in his book *Idols for Destruction*.

The Bible uses language of judgment (people fashion for themselves "idols of destruction," Hosea 8:4), which is not language modern human beings want to hear.

The irony is, however, that this "judgment" language is far more hopeful than the language of decline and decay. There's not a lot you can do about decline and decay — it's inevitable, Bolt noted. But sin "can be repented of, conversion can take place, and renewal by the Spirit of God is a sure promise of the Gospel."

Philosophy prof explores God's calling in the workplace

Bert Witvoet

BURLINGTON, Ont. — According to Lee Hardy, the path that leads from faith to the workplace has become overgrown in our society. "People no longer see the connection between our daily work and God's call. We tend to relegate religious service to church work."

'Vocation' is not 'job'

Hardy, a professor of philosophy at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich., spoke at the "Changing Workplace, Unchanging Faith" conference sponsored by the Work Research

Foundation (WRF) and the Christian Labour Association of Canada. He is the author of *The Fabric of This World*, a book co-sponsored by the WRF.

Before Hardy reconnected the path of faith and work, he first drove two wedges between the notions of "vocation" and "job." The first wedge said that "our vocation is much larger than our job."

It was Martin Luther who radically re-conceived the principle of vocation, Hardy said. Each believer is called to fulfil duties in a variety of social roles — in family, church and state,

for example. What Luther was saying, in effect is that vocation has to do with all our relationships in life.

The second wedge Hardy drove between vocation and job was "My job is not my vocation at all." We are called to a way of life, said Hardy, before we are called to anything else. We are called to repentance, to faith, to fellowship with Christ, to step out of the darkness into light, to be holy — to be saints.

Golden handcuffs

But Hardy would not have been a good Calvinist, nor

would he have escaped the wrath of his audience, had he not reconnected vocation and work. Instead of being determined primarily by economic considerations, our work needs to be embedded in a moral and ethical framework, he said.

"Work becomes more meaningful when it becomes less important," he said enigmatically. He was referring to the pressure placed on workers by corporations or to the drive of career-ladder climbers. Hardy urged his audience to throw off their golden handcuffs and to lead a "reasonable lifestyle."

He finally called for reconsidering the way work is structured. Jobs have been dumbed down in this technological society through managerial control and manipulation. Hardy pleaded for corporate structures of openness and co-operation. Workers must be allowed "to



Dr. Lee Hardy

use their creativity and intelligence in the service of the neighbor," he said.

"In many ways we have become a work and entertainment society," Hardy said during the discussion that followed his presentation.

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October 30 and 31, 1998

The past one hundred years have witnessed a renaissance of reflection on social issues from both Protestant and Catholic thinkers. To commemorate the promulgation of *Rerum Novarum* by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 and Abraham Kuyper's 1898 Stone Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary, the Acton Institute and Calvin Theological Seminary are sponsoring a two-day academic conference assessing the legacy of the past century of Christian social thinking and charting course for Christian social ethics for the next hundred years.

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News

Christian community could lose billions, claims agency

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bulletins is that donors must have an "arm's length" relationship with a charity to which they donate, which could be seen as related to the idea of "detached, disinterested generosity." One example of this is described thus in a Revenue Canada bulletin: "A charity may not issue an official receipt for income tax purposes if the donor has directed the charity to give the funds to a specified person or family. In reality, such a gift is made to the person or family and not the charity. However, donations subject to a general direction from the donor that the gift be used in a particular program operated by the program are acceptable, provided that no benefit accrues to the donor, the directed gift does not benefit any person not dealing at arm's length with the donor, and decisions regarding utilization of the donation within a program rest with the charity."

A strange definition

"This is probably the most serious issue ever faced by donors to the church and other religious charities," states CCCC on its website. "Revenue Canada's position could lead to churches no longer being permitted to issue official tax receipts for income tax purposes."

In fact, Canada's Christian community could lose as much as \$3 billion a year in tax credits because of the new definition, according to CCCC. The agency questions the meaning of the new definition: "We have yet to speak to a donor who believes that he or she has ever made a gift out of a 'detached, disinterested generosity.' The dictionary meanings of these words are an oxymoron for all donors who take their acts of giving seriously."

People who could be affected by the new wording include members of local congregations who could be seen as having special interest in their churches, and therefore could be disqualified from charitable receipts.

No straight answers

Parents of children at Christian schools, who donate money beyond the cost of tuition to independent agencies, which in turn donate money to the schools, could also be hit hard.

Gerzinus Hoekstra is one such



Gary Reitsma of OACS

person. In mid-September, Hoekstra received a letter from Revenue Canada explaining that his taxes from 1994 and 1995 had been reassessed. All his charitable donations to Corban Charitable Trust had been disqualified.

"I have to pay close to 11,000 or 12,000 bucks!" says Hoekstra incredulously. Not only that, but Hoekstra received no tax refunds for 1996 or 1997 and was forced to pay more taxes than he had expected. "I paid this under protest," he says. Although he has been in touch with Revenue Canada, Hoekstra says, "I can't get any straight answers from anyone.... No reason was given."

Asked why Revenue Canada has been pursuing him, Hoekstra asserts, "I think they're after money. They don't want to raise taxes." He thinks Revenue Canada is targeting Christians because they are not known as being aggressive.

Hoekstra has been waiting to hear back from Corban. But according to CCCC's Dick Kranendonk, founder and director of Corban, "Corban is no longer in business because of this."

Hoekstra's case may be just the tip of the iceberg.

An agency similar to Corban is Christian Economic Assistance Foundation (CEAF). Gary Reitsma, director of financial services for the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS) explains how CEAF works. If parents have one or more children in a Christian school, they will pay a cost per student to the school. Then the parents may make a donation to CEAF.

Reitsma points out that once the family donates money to CEAF, "at that point, they've lost control of the [money]. That money is the foundation's to do with as they see fit."

Next, he says, "The school requests a grant from CEAF,

These grants help to reduce the cost per pupil for parents."

Reitsma says Revenue Canada "has indicated they don't feel CEAF grants should qualify for purposes of reducing the cost per pupil." In response, OACS has corresponded with Revenue Canada by letter, explains Reitsma.

CEAF sent a letter to Christian schools last month, explaining the situation. CEAF also commits itself to ensuring that its grant program, known as the School Society Support Program will continue in its present form.

Because of cases such as Hoekstra's and those of some Christian schools in Ontario, CCCC is trying to raise \$2.5 million for a legal trust fund so that it can defend in court the traditional definition of gifts to religious charities. "To date, we have \$1.5 million raised," reports CCCC's Kranendonk.

One court case is now underway in Kitchener, Ont., which could set a precedent for how the government treats Christian charities in the future (see sidebar). Kranendonk says congregations will be "the last area [Revenue Canada] will zero in on" regarding disallowing charitable donations. But he insists, "It will happen if we sit back and let it happen.... We are sounding the alarm bells."

A legalistic loophole

But John Vriend, an education professor at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ont., has a different view about Revenue Canada's interpretation of charitable giving. "It has been my view that the Christian school community has been too eager to get whatever tax benefit it could without being too careful that we, as a Christian community, obey both the letter and the spirit of the law," insists Vriend. He thinks some Christian agencies "may be using technicalities and legalisms to subvert the intent of the law."

Vriend sees two possible responses for the Christian community to make: "On the one hand, we have to try to get deductions that help Christians maximize their giving. There's also the principle of honesty, so we obey the letter and the spirit of the law." With this in mind, Vriend advises that Christians "ought not to be devious... because it's not right and it undermines our Christian witness."

Kitchener case could set precedent for Christian school donations

Alan Doerksen

KITCHENER, Ont. — Mennonites in Kitchener, Ont., and other concerned Christians are banding together to challenge in court Revenue Canada's new interpretation of charitable giving. The outcome of this case could set a precedent for how Revenue Canada deals with donations to Christian schools and other agencies that conduct religious instruction.

The First Mennonite Church case began with a 1997 Tax Court of Canada case. The result of that case was appealed by Revenue Canada, which will result in a Federal Court of Appeal case to be heard in November.

Both cases relate to taxpayers who made contributions to the student aid fund of First Mennonite Church in Kitchener during the years in which their children attended Rockway Mennonite School. The aid fund supports students who attend Rockway and other Mennonite schools.

According to the Canadian Council of Christian Charities (CCCC), Revenue Canada's position is that the parents received an indirect benefit as a result of their contributions because their children were being educated at Rockway, and that no portion of such contributions could be received for income tax purposes.

But the evidence presented clearly established that there was no direct connection between the amount of the contribution made and the bursary received by any donor's child.

So, the judge decided that parents with children enrolled at Rockway could get tax benefits, because of a Revenue Canada Information Circular 75-23 (IC 75-23), a policy document for religious schools he interpreted as being "law."

"The judge did some interesting gymnastics," asserts Dick Kranendonk, director of stewardship services for CCCC.

This court case took place last year, but Revenue Canada has asked for a judicial review because it does not want IC 75-23 to be considered to have the force of law.

The review will take place in November, and CCCC will be directly involved, says Kranendonk. He notes that Revenue Canada has now dropped out of the case. Kranendonk says he thinks Revenue Canada dropped out because if the Mennonite defendants win, the case could go to a higher court level, where it could set a legal precedent. The case will still be heard in November because, he explains, "the [Mennonite] taxpayers counter-appealed. That appeal still stands."

Both the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS) and the Christian Education Assistance Foundation (CEAF) have also committed their agencies to intervene in the case on behalf of the Mennonite parents.

Wide implications

On its website, CCCC emphasizes the importance of this case and its possible implications: "It is hoped that, because of the interventions, the profile and importance of the case will be raised in the eyes of the judges who consider the issue. It is our hope that the court will get the message that this is a case with far-reaching implications.

"Canadian tax courts have up until now accepted that religious instruction that is not part of formal vocational training is not a benefit of a commercial nature. Accordingly, funds contributed for the support of a ministry which includes this type of religious instruction have traditionally been treated as gifts for income tax purposes. We believe Revenue Canada now wants to test whether the Canadian judiciary will still uphold this principle."

But John Vriend, an education professor at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ont., questions the legitimacy of the First Mennonite Church case. "Maybe Revenue Canada is legally targeting this money-laundering scheme," he asserts. In his opinion, the case involves "a group [which] has funneled their tuition through a church agency and has gotten almost all their tuition [treated] as a donation."

Editorial

Letters from a senior to a junior editor (2)

A few rambling thoughts on 'the Antithesis'

My Dear Wordgood:

In my first letter to you, I urged you to be on the alert against Hedonism, that sneaky seducer. Today, I want to focus on the fact that we, Christians, are engaged in a battle against the spirits of this age. Actually, I want to talk about "the Antithesis." It's a mouthful, but it captures something important.

I know — the idea of fighting battles is not popular among your peers. You don't like singing "Onward, Christian Soldiers, marching as to war." That sounds too militaristic. I can get into that feeling. Especially when one sings the refrain, the rhythm becomes very march-like. One can almost hear the drums and the steady clatter of steel-shod boots on the pavement of a large square.

But the Apostle Paul does write to the Ephesians: "Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." The image here is not one of marching in militaristic display of power, however. It is more of a defensive pose: "So that when the evil day comes, you may be able to stand your ground." In this text, at least, we are not called upon to attack evil so much as to hold

our ground against it, while our feet are "fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace."

The 'Antithesis' years*

In the early years of the Reformational movement in Canada (I'm talking about the '50s and '60s), there was a lot of talk about "the Antithesis." Speakers representing the Association for Reformed Scientific Studies (now known as ICS), went around the various Reformed immigrant communities in Canada talking about the Antithesis. With that term they meant to highlight the conflict between Christ's rule and Satan's rebellion, between Christian action and worldly action. They called upon us Christians to reform our culture.

Today we don't mention the antithesis and reforming culture much anymore. Maybe the older terminology sounded too confrontational and triumphalist.

Our hearts burned

The first time I heard about "the Antithesis" was in Dr. H. Evan Runner's class at Calvin College in 1956. It came up in his course on ancient Greek philosophy. Before that, I was a decent Christian Reformed boy who minded his own business. But then this bespectacled, energetic scholar who waved his arms to make a point and dangled his glasses from his one ear as he threw out Greek, Latin, Dutch and German phrases with abandon, put fire into our bosom. Like a prophet, he proclaimed the grand vision of being able to throw off centuries of dualism and synthesis by adhering to the Word of God and by adopting a philosophy called the *Wijsbegeerte der Wetssidee* (the philosophy of the law-idea). Runner gave us a boxful of worldview tools with which we could dismantle any humanistic structure. One of those tools was the concept of the Antithesis.

The term "antithesis" is, of course, a philosophical term used by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, for one, when he traced development of thought from thesis to antithesis to synthesis. That in itself should caution us. To use the term is to use a philosophically loaded term, even though Abraham Kuyper used it confessionally and saw "the Thesis" as the Word of God. But did we always start with the Word of God when we talked about the Antithesis? Or did we use the Antithesis to set up barriers between ourselves and others? Did we perhaps intellectualize the battle against the Evil One?

A titanic struggle

Whatever you may think of our youthful idealism, Dear Wordgood, I think we should maintain the idea that there is an irreconcilable opposition between the rule of God and the rule of Satan. This conflict started when God said to the serpent in Paradise: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." Notice how God initiates what an NIV Study Bible note calls "the titanic struggle between himself and the evil one, and this struggle is played out in the

hearts and history of humankind."

My own response to Genesis 3:15 is: "What, therefore, God has put asunder let no well-meaning Christian join together." We as Christians must take sides and acknowledge the enmity between the forces of evil and the forces of light.

Jesus himself is quoted as saying: "Do you think that I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division" (Luke 12:51). It almost sounds as if Jesus is playing the role of Ate, the goddess of discord in Greek mythology. She caused disharmony between the goddesses by leaving a golden apple at a wedding feast to which she had not been invited. The apple carried the inscription "To the fairest." That's asking for trouble when you deal with goddesses! But Jesus does not throw the proverbial apple of discord into the world when he says that he came to bring division. He simply recognizes the fact that his mission of peace will bring hatred and opposition from Satan and his followers.



I believe that we have entered a period in which the emphasis is going to be on tolerance, pluralism, unity and sensitivity to others, not on the polarity between the forces of light and darkness. This will greatly affect your editorship, Dear Wordgood. We can learn a lot about acceptance and tolerance, but we should not allow the call for unity to drown out the call of Ephesians 12: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

The slough of relativism

I like what James Packard says in a recent interview with *Leadership* magazine: "We're going to have to fight much more against religious pluralism.... It will take us also a couple of decades to get out of the swamp of what's called postmodernism, where you have no notion of absolute truth. In the churches we will have to be constantly speaking against that because God does speak truth."

I sense in Packard's statement a deep awareness of the fact that Christians are engaged in spiritual warfare and that the spirit of postmodernism wants to put us to sleep when it comes to standing our ground against the forces of false tolerance and false pluralism.

My Dearest Wordgood, don't let go of the notion of the Antithesis. Or if you find the word too encumbered with historical baggage, use the term "spiritual warfare." Don't forget, the gentiles of our time continue to live in the futility of their thinking (Eph. 4:17).

Let's celebrate the Thesis, Wordgood: God, Creation, the Bible, Christ. Satan will provide the Antithesis because he is anti-God, anti-Creation, anti-Bible and the Antichrist.

*Affectionately yours,
Truett*

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CHRISTIAN COURIER STAFF

Editor: Bert Witvoet cceditor@aol.com

Managing Editor: Marian Van Til ccmanager@aol.com

Promotions & Marketing Director: Diane Klein ccadpromo@aol.com

Reporter, Layout: Alan Doerksen ccjournal@aol.com

Circle Management: Grace Bowman ccsubscript@aol.com

Advertising, Layout: Ingrid Torn ccadpromo@aol.com

REGIONAL REPORTERS:

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Christian Courier

4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON, L2W 1A1

Tel: (905) 682-8311;

Fax: (905) 682-8313;

E-mail: cceditor@aol.com

Letters

God's revelation is still active

After almost 25 years as an Anglican, my Reformed heritage has never left me and has served me well in defending progressive orthodoxy (*semper Reformanda*) against neo-fundamentalism.

So it is with some dismay that I read the conversations between Hendrik Hart [the letter-writer's brother] and Al Wolters about "timeless principles" in the Bible. Neo-fundamentalism is apparently alive and well in both churches.

The thesis posited by Hart is that there are no "timeless principles" in Scripture. He is confirmed in that by none other than Reformed philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd as long as 70 years ago. One might also quote Reformed theologian Hendrikus Berkhof, who writes, "...that in his revelation God manifests himself in

the first place as a mobile God who repeatedly changes direction and who renders earlier initiatives obsolete through new starts."

'Progressive' is an active word

On the other hand, we have Wolters, who categorically disagrees with this assumption. For Wolters the Bible is God's ever valid revelation that does not change at least in the NT, good for all times and all places. It's all been said and done, we just need to listen, follow and obey. Not much room for the continuing creativity of God through the Spirit here. Been there, done that.

Curiously Wolters gives himself away when he suggests that "...there is a single plan of God which is being worked out through all these changes, and that the

discontinuities have meaning only within the context of the underlying continuities of God's progressive revelation." I don't think Hart would disagree, and Wolters seems to affirm that the most basic things change.

They do, indeed. However, progressive revelation apparently stopped for Wolters when the Bible was canonized. But "progressive," and "revelation," are active words. By their very nature they imply change. In fact some principles need to change, in continuity of course, to address our present reality.

There are no principles in the Bible that tell us precisely what to do about nuclear waste, or how to deal with genetic manipulation, to mention but two examples. There are, however, rules for taking care of unruly children. Exodus tells us you should take them before the elders of the people who will stone them to death.

Sovereignty an attribute

Wolters writes: "If you want to convince your readers that the Bible gives us no timeless principles, you will have to deal with what most of your readers probably do regard as timeless principles, for example the sovereignty of God or the centrality of Christ." Does Wolters seriously suggest that these are principles? "Sovereignty" is an attribute of God, and the "centrality of Christ" is a theological concept not specifically mentioned in Scripture. Neither are "principles" as Hart describes them.

But let's ascribe the word "principle" to "the centrality of Christ." It would certainly fit Wolters' dictionary definition. Even on that basis we understand that principle today differently than did the early Christians in Acts. Or is Wolters a

member of a commune and shares everything with all other Christians?

A New Testament daddy

Is Hart's view faulty when he suggests that the Old Testament "fear" is replaced by "love" in the Epistle of John? Wolters thinks so and suggests that "fear of God" remains a potent presence in the New Testament. A quick search of the New Testament will reveal that fear is mentioned only sparingly.

Compare that with Israel's experience of God when the law is given on Sinai. Israel is in absolute dread of God: "Do not let God speak to us, or we will die." The overwhelming evidence in the New Testament is well expressed in Romans 8:15-16: "For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry 'Abba! Father!' it is that very spirit bearing witness ...that we are children of God."

What a remarkable passage. We may call God "Daddy!" That's a real change in principle from the Old Testament.

Finally, is it reasonable to assume that the God revealed as faithful and loving toward Israel throughout the Old Testament, and through Jesus Christ in the New, all of a sudden stops revealing with the closing of the Canon of Scripture?

The biblical mandate is very active, moving us forward, beyond, but never without, the inscripturated Word. God's law written on our hearts, not on tablets of stone. God present and working in us, ever renewing. That's Gospel for me.

Willem Hart
Toronto, Ont.

(See related letters on page 6)

Maybe Hart and Wolters are both right

The discussion in CC between Hart and Wolters is certainly interesting. Readers have to decide with whom to agree; or can we agree with both to some extent?

It seems that Wolters puts all the emphasis on the Word, whereas Hart says that the Bible stresses the primacy of the Spirit. Wolters accuses Hart of promoting discontinuity and Hart states that he has "no discontinuity in mind" but follows the Scriptural teaching regarding the work of the Holy Spirit.

Is there a conflict here?

It seems to me that Wolters himself also struggled with the problem of continuity versus change as he, in his philosophical introduction to his book *Creation Regained*, tries to help us with the distinction between *structure* and *direction*. I liked Wolters' book so much that I translated it into Dutch (though, at the same time, I questioned that distinction).

In that book Wolters warns against over-simplification. He writes that "the status quo is never acceptable. Any structure needs inner renewal and structural reform" (p. 78). Thus Wolters, too, pleads for changes, not only directional, but structural changes.

Believers make changes

So perhaps Wolters and Hart are not too far apart after all. Both see things that remain — continuity — and things that change — discontinuity. Reformation is an ongoing process. The church, by its very nature, is a restless body.

We don't have to be apostles to make changes in the structure of the church. Believers do this and synods approve or disapprove changes.

In my younger years in the Netherlands it was considered sinful to sing hymns in a worship service — hymns

were good only for singing around the harmonium on a Sunday evening. Then we went from services without hymns, to services with one hymn, to services with only hymns. And in the Christian Reformed Church in North America we went from the "Red Hymnal" of the early decades of the century to the 1957 "Blue Hymnal" to the 1987 "Grey Hymnal," and every time the number of hymns increased. The Holy Spirit has opened our eyes and hearts to a new spiritual freedom: the freedom of Psalm 98 to "sing a new song to the Lord."

And think of the position of women in the CRC: from voiceless women, to voting members, to the offices of deacon, elder and minister. This is how the Spirit leads.

We know in part

I am reminded strongly of my former teacher Dr. Klaas Schilder, who taught us ethics at the seminary in Kampen, the Netherlands. It is not necessary to explain Schilder's definition of ethics. I merely wish to point out that he combined "constant values" and "changing administrations" or "dispensations" with the concrete decisions that must be made in each individual case.

This means that the church can change, and often *must* change. Things which we once considered sinful, such as birth control, have now become part of a responsible Christian lifestyle.

We need the continuity of the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we read the Scriptures today and seek his guidance in the actual concrete situations we face. We still know only "in part" (1 Cor. 13:12).

Remkes Kooistra
Waterloo, Ont.

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Letters

Don't rely on traditional answers to stifle vibrant discussion

I have read the exchange between Henk Hart and Al Wolters regarding the work of the Spirit in times of transition. It is an interesting topic, to say the least. The whole notion of change, including the ultimate tantalizing question: Does God change?, I find intriguing. I believe an open and honest study of the issues could be very liberating.

The deeply entrenched

doctrine of the immutability of God seems to rest on shallow biblical foundation. In fact, it appears to me that that doctrine is frequently contradicted in the biblical narrative of God's interaction with his people. I have many questions about that interaction and the leading of the Spirit in our time, and I hope the dialogue can continue.

While I have appreciated the

studied courtesy of the exchange and the level of the debate, Dr. Wolters' second response, in particular, concerns me. The final paragraph of that piece beginning with the words "Brother, your reading of the Bible..." and concluding with "...should be viewed with the greatest suspicion" is not encouraging.

Regardless of the sibling

Jesus puts the fear of God in us

Henk Hart wants us to think that fearing God is an Old Testament concept and that the principle "fear God" is replaced by the principle "love God" in the New Testament. The truth of the matter is that both principles run side by side in both testaments, timeless and inseparable aspects of our relationship with God.

Dr. Hart's thoughts about the fear of God (Sept. 11, 1998) got me thinking about the teachings of Jesus. If Henk's observation is correct, we will not find Jesus instilling the fear of God in New Testament people. But an overview of Jesus' teachings shows us otherwise. Here's what you find in the gospel of Matthew:

The parables of Jesus make the *Tales of the Brother's Grimm* look like nursery rhymes. An unmerciful servant is jailed and tortured till he pays up (18:34). A king sends an army to destroy and burn the murderers and their city who reject and kill the messengers sent to invite them to his banquet (22:7). A wedding guest who doesn't dress for the feast is tied hand and foot and thrown into the darkness (22:14). A house steward who beats his servants and drinks with drunkards is cut to pieces and assigned a place with the hypocrites where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (24:51). And unmerciful people are called goats, shunted

to the left and sent away to eternal punishment into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels (25:41).

Strong words

Apart from the parables which contrast the blessings and the curses that will come to people, depending on the choices they make with respect to God, Jesus also does some tough teaching which puts the "fear of God" into people.

Everything that causes sin, and all who do evil, are thrown into the fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (13:42). The blind leading the blind will fall into pits (15:14). People who cause little ones and others to sin are better off drowning with millstones around their necks or having eyes gouged out or feet and hands cut off (18:1-17). Hypocrites are called snakes and vipers and threatened with hell (23:33).

The God we meet in the Old Testament is full of love and grace for his people. But he's no patsy as he threatens and finally thrusts his people away. His Son, the Good Shepherd whom we meet in the New Testament, is likewise full of love and grace. But he is also no patsy as he tells stories of people who are threshed and thrown away.

Thankfully, in both testaments we also see God actively restoring the very people who have rejected him. This hope of redemption is another timeless principle that runs throughout Scripture.

We need both

We need to remember that fear, like pain, is actually a good thing. Both are divinely installed alarm systems meant to keep us human beings from spiritual, emotional and physical harm. Live out of God's promises and you have nothing to fear. Ignore God's warnings and reject his person, and he will take you to task with fearful results.

I love God. But I fear him, too. In fact, I can appreciate the fact that God knows me well enough to realize that I need both the promise of a safe arrival and the warning of a speeding ticket in order to be a responsible driver. I need the promise of a wonderful marriage and the warning of a destroyed family to be a good husband. I need the love of God and the fear of God to keep me on The Way.

Jesus promises us heaven and warns us about hell. In the same breath. In the same parables. No, I can't agree with Henk Hart that the fear of God is an example of an outmoded principle that no longer functions in our relationship with the Lord. It's a timeless principle affirmed in the very teachings of Christ.

Peter Slofstra
St. Catharines, Ont.

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reference to persons equally committed to Christ, the language is paternalistic and even judgmental. It reads like a filial admonition and a not-so-gentle closing of the door to further discussions. That's regrettable.

Regrettable too is Wolters' reliance on traditional answers and doctrine when used to stifle an exciting and vibrant consideration of the ways of the Spirit, the truth of Scripture and the living continuing revelation of God.

Dr. Wolters states "You cannot appeal to the Spirit to go beyond the Word." I ask: Why not? To my way of thinking, his declaration imposes not only human restraints but limits God as well. Wolters says, "...We are not apostles and our Bible is not incomplete." These statements do little but raise more questions

in my mind and, to some extent, appear to beg the question being debated in the first place.

On the perhaps dangerous assumption that there are others who share my concerns, I venture to suggest that both *Christian Courier* and its readers could benefit greatly from an informed, unfettered discussion of this issue and other topical and timely matters, including a review of a number of Church doctrines. Pat, easy answers we can (and frequently do) get in church. Perhaps that is as it should be.

In my opinion, "preaching" and resorting to traditional positions as the definitive and exclusive answer should find little room on the pages of *Christian Courier*, including the editorial page.

Wietse Posthumus
Toronto, Ont.

A trinity of agreement

Archbishop [of Canterbury George] Carey, Dr. Al Wolters and the Bible all agree: homosexual behavior is a sin. That's enough proof for me.

Marian den Boer
Hamilton, Ont.

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Arts/Media

Film Review

Hollywood confronts death



MERYL STREEP

RENEE ZELLWEGER

WILLIAM HURT

ONE TRUE THING

Marian Van Til

Rated PG. Directed by Carl Franklin.

North American society, on the whole, doesn't confront death very well. Youth is venerated; the effects of age are to be eradicated; disease is to be feared; and "suffering," from headaches to hemorrhoids, must be alleviated at all costs.

In Hollywood, Land of Narcissism and the body beautiful, this attitude is magnified a hundredfold. So we don't rightly expect films from Tinseltown to unblinkingly confront terminal illness and death; to stage the death of a main character to whom we become attached; and to allow the actress who plays her to appear on screen shorn of hair, with skin pasty gray, looking as pain-wracked and emaciated as any real, last-stage cancer patient.

But then, Meryl Streep is not any ordinary actress whose own personal beauty takes precedence over the "reality" of her character. And nor, it turns out, is relative-newcomer Renée Zellweger, who plays Streep's daughter. (Unfortunately, William Hurt's performance as the husband/father is too mannered and insubstantial to allow us to sympathize with the man.)

This film isn't only about the coping of Streep's character, a near-50 housewife who finds out she has cancer. It's also about what it means for a man to have vowed in marriage to remain committed to his wife ("...for better or for worse, in sickness and in health ... till death do us part"). And it's about an intelligent, career-oriented daughter's forced reassessment of the home- and hearth-bound mother whom she has always seen as weak and myopic, and of her own relationship to that mother.

A different universe

The daughter is like, and has from childhood successfully emulated, her father, an English professor at a suburban New York college: an intellectual lover of literature and aspiring writer; a driven personality, not taken with trivialities and easily dismissive of those who are. The younger brother has tried, less successfully, to be like Dad.

The mother/wife seems to inhabit a different universe, though one which revolves around her family. She is singlemindedly centred on her husband and children, consumed with enhancing their comfort (and that of everyone she knows, for that matter). Her women friends have the same locus.

Because she has no aspirations to do or be anything else, her husband, and her children (by his example), assume she hasn't the intellectual or moral strength or imagination to formulate such dreams, much less live them out.

Her cancer proves them very wrong. She is — by far — the strongest and most resilient of them all. But it takes the daughter, and more so, the husband/father, a very long time to comprehend that. Most of the film is taken up with their "discovery" of this woman they thought they knew.

My mother, my self

An important side plot is the daughter's identity crisis — she very gradually, reluctantly realizes that she is, truly, much more like her mother than her father.

Mother and daughter have never been close. But this gradual recognition on the part of the daughter, and the necessity for her to accommodate a whole new side of herself which she didn't dream existed, recasts the mother/daughter relationship.

On the other hand, the daughter must "process" the devastating disappointment and anger she feels when she finds out that her father is both a philanderer and, in several ways, an intellectual fraud.

There's much insight here which rings painfully true to fallen human nature. Yet for all this film's honesty, what Christian viewers (or any viewers who realize that we are more than material beings) will miss is any confrontation of the fact that facing death raises spiritual questions, and (particularly for the "non-religious") fears, in any thinking person.

Is this all there is?

No such questions are raised here. The closest the film comes to recognizing any kind of spiritual existence is during a village Christmas scene, when there's the somewhat peculiar inclusion of two whole stanzas of "Silent Night."

I say somewhat peculiar because the small-town mayor has just flicked the switch lighting all the Christmas trees in the village square, accompanied by those now ubiquitous words designed to be oh-so-inoffensive: "Happy Holidays" — a usual sign that we are being invited to forget that Christmas still has that unfortunate Name in it.

But surprisingly, a choir (whose members look like they're members of various church choirs) directly launches into that familiar carol, Christian text clearly audible. Nostalgia? Perhaps. But I still find it peculiar that the film pauses so relatively long on a text which proclaims "Jesus, Lord at [his] birth," and "Son of God, love's pure light"; and shows the dying mother as the first townsperson to begin singing along. A veiled confession of faith?

It almost makes one wonder whether someone among those responsible for making this rather secular film used this scene to get a subtle countervailing message across. Or is that my wishful thinking?

Focus on the Family launches 'webzine' for college students

(religiontoday.com) Focus on the Family has begun publishing an Internet magazine for college students. *Boundless* will cover topics from a Christian worldview and provide practical ideas for life-management and spiritual development, the ministry said.

The "webzine" will include articles that discuss "love

beyond sex, a worldview beyond political correctness, and faith beyond sociological stereotypes," editor Candice Watters said. Writers include Jay Budziszewski of the University of Texas at Austin, Wade Horn of the National Fatherhood Initiative, Gene Edward Veith of Concordia University, and Amy Stephens of Focus on the Family.

Encyclopedia Britannica launches selective Web search engine

NEW YORK (EB) — Encyclopedia Britannica (EB), one of the oldest encyclopedia publishers, recently launched a new Internet search engine, Eblast. Touted as "a World Wide Web navigation service," Eblast searches only pre-reviewed sites.

EB claims to include "only the highest-quality Web re-

sources," using a rating system considers based on depth, accuracy, credentials and authority of the author, elegance of design, and frequency of revision. While Eblast does not claim to be child friendly, it does have a Kids area. Currently English-only Web sites are considered for inclusion.

Eblast: <http://www.eblast.com>

The Owen Sound First Christian Reformed Church invites everyone to join in celebrating their 50th Anniversary on October 9, 10 and 11, 1998

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Church

Conservative Reformed churches look toward Mexico, back to Creation

(URNS) — When the Alliance of Reformed Churches convenes at Messiah's Independent Reformed Church of Holland, Mich., on October 15 and 16, it will have no overtures before it, but expects a light agenda focusing on the reports of its missions committee and a special conference on "six-day creation."

The Alliance of Reformed Churches, once the main umbrella body for conservative churches in the Christian Reformed Church and later the primary organization of churches that had left the CRC, now serves as an loose association mostly composed of those

churches that did not want to join the United Reformed Churches in North America after its 1995 decision to federate.

Mission to Mexico

The alliance missions committee is supporting a proposal by retired Mid-America Reformed Seminary professor Dr. P.Y. DeJong in Beecher, Illinois, and Juan Calvino Theological Seminary professor Dr. John P. Roberts in Mexico City to divide the Mexican mission field among conservative Reformed denominations and fellowships in the United States.

The proposal would assign

different regions in Mexico to nine denominations and denominational fellowships in the United States. The proposal recommends that the alliance adopt the west-central coast of Mexico, focusing on the Mexican states of Nayarit, Jalisco, Colima, and Aguascalientes whose chief cities consist of Tepic, Guadalajara, Aguascalientes, and Colima.

Rev. Harry Bout, formerly pastor of the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church (Independent) of Toronto, has been called by Messiah's Independent Reformed Church of Holland to work as a missionary in the city of Tepic.

If the alliance adopts the "Vision for Mexico" plan, it would have a goal of working with the Independent Presbyterian Church of Mexico to establish a new West-Central Coast Presbytery and develop a presbyterian Bible school. The "Vision for Mexico" plan noted that a Presbyterian missionary

under Wycliffe had once begun churches in the area that are now disorganized and often led by Pentecostals or Baptists.

Looking for literal assent

The other major formal item on the agenda is receipt of a "Report on the Creation Days."

"Our purpose in this discussion was to attempt to sort out and put to rest any disagreements within the confessionally Reformed community of churches so that both theological and confessional unity may be achieved," wrote the committee.

"In particular, we were to address any significant challenges to the traditional six literal 24-hour day position with the intention of noting the major arguments against this position and the appropriate biblical response to them."

The core committee members were Rev. Ken Anema of Messiah's IRC of Holland, Elder Bruce DeVisser of the Toronto OCRC (Ind.), Rev. Geoffrey

Donnan of Reformation Christian Ministries, Rev. Steve McGee of Wayland (Mich.) IRC, and Rev. Paul Murphy of Dutton (Mich.) IRC. The ARC appointed elders Pete Elzinga and Rick Poll of Dutton IRC, and Rev. Steve Schlissel of Messiah's Congregation of Brooklyn, New York.

Partly because of the inter-denominational nature of recent alliance work, Pete Elzinga said he expects to have at least some Presbyterians attending the upcoming ARC meeting.

"I would say we are generally going to have good discussion on the mission issue, and the expansion possibly by adding some Presbyterian churches," said Elzinga. "The fact that we opened it up so denominations can have membership in the alliance has prompted some interest among Presbyterians, particularly some of the smaller bodies."

Mother Teresa's order going strong

(religiontoday.com) — Membership in the Missionaries of Charity has soared since Mother Teresa's death a year ago. The number of nuns in the order has grown to 4,900 from 4,000 since its founder and leader died, the *Catholic Herald* newspaper said.

The growth will confound those who predicted the order would fall apart without its "charismatic figurehead," the London newspaper said. Sister Nirmala, the Indian nun who succeeded Mother Teresa, told reporters this month that the order received many large donations immediately after Mother Teresa's death, although



Mother Teresa

donations have been at normal levels in recent months.



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Priest opposes woman's ordination: his wife's

LONDON (religiontoday.com) — An Anglican priest is leaving his denomination because it ordains women as priests — including his wife. Fred Bonham, 61, opposes the policy of ordaining women

priests and is becoming a Catholic, Catholic World News said. His wife, Valerie, serves in his parish as a deacon, but plans to be ordained as a priest in December.

The situation would seem to

be endangering the marriage, but Bonham remains supportive of his wife, he said. "You must be tolerant of the other person's convictions. She is doing what she wants to do and I must allow her that freedom."

Hindus launch missions among Christians

NEW DELHI (EP) — Hindus in northeast India are launching a campaign to convert Christians to the Hindu faith. Arbind Bhattacharya of the Hindu World Council told the newspaper *Asian Age* that a campaign is being organized to spread Hinduism among India's Christians.

Though a Hindu outreach campaign may be new, India is no stranger to proselytism efforts. Over 700 foreign and

more than 11,000 native Christians in India are reportedly engaged in evangelistic activities of their own. Of India's one billion people, 82 per cent are Hindu, 12 per cent Muslim, and only about three per cent

Christian.

Christian missionaries have come under attack from radical Hindu politicians, who charge some of the missionaries with supporting separatist movements.

Friends of Arie and Ellen are invited to share in the 40th Anniversary celebration of

Rev. Arie Van Eek's

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Church

The Guidance of the Spirit

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come." (John 16:13, NIV)

These words of Jesus are part of the so-called "Farewell Discourses" which are found in John 13-17. They are also part of the instruction which Jesus gives about the "Paraclete" (Greek *Parakletos*), that is, the Counselor or Comforter, who will come after Christ's ascension.

A striking feature of this text in the original Greek is the use of the masculine pronoun to refer to the Spirit. The Greek word for spirit (*pneuma*) is neuter, and in strict grammar it ought to be referred to with a neuter pronoun ("it"). But here Christ uses the masculine pronoun ("he") instead.

This is very striking not only because it goes against the rules of Greek grammar but also because "spirit" in the Old Testament is usually feminine, not masculine. Jesus' words here give biblical support to the long tradition in the Christian church of calling the Holy Spirit a "he," that is, a masculine person. In this way, our text plays a crucial role in current discussions about gender, language and God.

Roman Catholics and Enthusiasts

In the past, however, this text has often played a role in quite different theological debates. At the time of the Reformation, for example, it was appealed to by Roman Catholic thinkers in their debates with the Reformers about Scripture and tradition.

The Reformers stressed the principle of *sola Scriptura* "Scripture alone," while Roman Catholic theologians claimed that the tradition of official church teaching had an authority comparable to that of Scripture. After all, they said, Christ had promised that his Spirit would guide the church into all truth. Consequently, even church teachings which could not be derived from Scripture could still claim divine authority, since it was God's Spirit who had guided the church into new insight.

This text also played a role in another debate at the time of the Reformation. There were a number of radical groups at the time (often called "Enthusiasts," and including a number of extreme Anabaptists) who appealed to the guidance of the Spirit to introduce all kinds of radical innovations which went beyond Scripture. They liked to appeal to 2 Cor 3:6: "For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life," and apply it to the relationship of Scripture to the

Chapter & Verse



Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
• Al Wolters

new revelations which their leaders had claimed to receive from the Spirit.

Against both the Roman Catholics and the Enthusiasts the Reformers stressed the sufficiency of Scripture. The Spirit gives no new revelation beyond the truth contained in Scripture. What Jesus meant when he promised that the Spirit would guide the church into all truth was primarily that the Spirit would enable the apostles to be faithful witnesses of Christ in their preaching and writing.

By inspiring the apostles to write the New Testament, the Spirit would guide the church through Scripture. Christ did not mean that the Spirit would give new revelation to the church in subsequent ages.

Widespread Agreement Today

All of these debates took place in the 16th century. Variations of them have occurred throughout the intervening centuries, whenever Protestants challenged the Roman Catholic view of tradition, or whenever new Spiritualistic movements arose which tended to devalue Scripture in comparison with the "inner light" of the Spirit.

Fortunately, however, there is now very widespread agreement among Christian exegetes — both Protestants and Catholics, liberals and conservatives — with respect to the interpretation of John 16:13. The guidance of the Spirit which Christ promises does not refer to new revelation beyond the apostolic witness, but it refers to an ever deeper understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ as revealed in that witness.

To quote the magisterial commentary on John by the Roman Catholic exegete Raymond Brown on this verse: "Roman Catholic theologians have seen in it a reference to continued unfolding of dogma during the period of the Church's existence. Yet we should be made cautious by comparing it to 15:15 which seems to exclude further revelations." The Spirit is completely dedicated to glorifying Christ as he is revealed in that witness.

Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ont. As CC readers know, he has recently had occasion to reflect on the relationship of Word and Spirit.

Brits 'saved from time of trial'

YORK, England (EP) — British Anglicans will continue to pray "Lead us not into temptation," as the phrase appears in the traditional English version of the Lord's Prayer.

A proposal to change the wording to "Save us from the time of trial" — which is used in

the Anglican Church in Canada's Book of Alternative Services — was rejected by the general synod of the Church of England. The synod rejected the phrase, though the church's parliament had approved the change in February.

The Church of England's lit-

urgical commission argued that "trial" was a more accurate translation than "temptation," but traditionalists rejected the proposal. Quipped Anthony Kilminster, chairperson of the Prayer Book Society, "I am overjoyed that we have been saved from a time of trial."

Chinese house churches want recognition

BEIJING, China (EP) — China's house church leaders are asking the government for official recognition. A statement issued in late August by 12 house church leaders urges China's leaders to accept the growth of the unofficial church and to give official recognition to Christians groups other than the government-approved Three-Self Patriotic Movement, which are currently outlawed.

China's underground house church movement has an estimated 80 million members, compared with 10 million in the official government-sanctioned church. The statement by house church leaders seeks the release of Christians who have been imprisoned for sharing their faith, and changes in the government's policy of persecuting house churches.

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One man's search for love

Looking for an escape route from troubles of the past

Thomas Lile

I remember the day as if it were yesterday. The sun was hot, but a light breeze bent the trees around the house. I jumped out of the Ford and dashed into the little brick house on Forest Park road. Seeing no one around, I got worried and bolted into mom's bedroom. The bed was ruffled and empty.

Her body was sunk over the toilet, her head had fallen forward into the wastebasket alongside. I froze in place. A foul odor invaded the room. I inched backward out the door and ran for help.

Daddy had died in this same room four years earlier. And now Mom. Why? — I wondered where, and when, this nightmare would end.

Having to watch your parents slowly drink themselves to death will do strange things to your mind. The pain of returning home each day to find, not an oasis of comfort and hope, but a hostile environment of indictment and hate, eats gradually away at the heart. Soon, one prefers to stay away, unwilling and unable to confront the obstacle called Home.

I didn't realize it at the time, but later that need to escape would be the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. I made the mistake of believing that those years of torment had escaped me as easily as dandelion fluff scatters in the wind. But I was wrong. Unknowingly, I carried the seeds of confusion and hate with me, and my life would be tinged with the troubles of the past. Indeed the sins of the fathers were visited upon me.

The beast within

I was now parentless. Perhaps I had actually been parentless for a long time. In such a situation, there is no direction in life's maze; every day is a construction of survival. If no adult friend or relative will step forward to lead, as none did for me — and lacking just about everything — each day becomes a creation of your own mind.

My mother's funeral was a simple gathering under quiet oaks in a New Orleans' cemetery. The casket bearing her

remains was moved from Florida to Louisiana in the baggage car of a passenger train which slowly wound its way through the night along the Gulf Coast.

Of necessity I was a passenger on that train that night, a small boy understanding little, forced by events to know more than he should one could wish for any child. I was afraid. I was to face life on my own, and I would soon meet the beast that dwelt within.

Then I learned that that "thing" deep inside, the beast, would be forever with me, it seemed; forever crying out to be

common; it makes demons of those who walk upright and faithful lives.

When my wife was packing to leave me, she made some pretty direct statements. Pointing a finger at me and shaking it, she said, "You never share with me from the deepest part of your heart.... You never tell me how much you love me. And you never do anything to show you care for me."

I questioned her perception of me, but I did resolve to change my ways. So, alone again, I made several promises to myself, a down-payment on things to come.

The pain of returning home each day to find, not an oasis of comfort and hope, but a hostile environment eats gradually away at the heart.

released. Its legs are lust, its loins are hate and its eyes forever engage you in deception and crossings.

The 'drop-out point'

I married in 1972, it was a clear, crisp day, near Christmas. My journey toward happiness seemed to have resumed. My life-long search for real love had come to an end, I believed, with the joining of this man and this woman. I was very young and very naive and believed that no matter what happened, no matter what obstacles came our way, surely our love would conquer all. I thought that my wife felt the same way.

In years to come, older and wiser, I would realize that most people have what I have dub the "drop-out point." For some, that point comes early; for others, later; but almost every person has one.

It is that time when, in a relationship, the situation becomes intolerable for one of the parties, and continuing becomes impossible. It turns happiness into despair; it breaks vows and causes exaggerations to become

I swear I'll do better

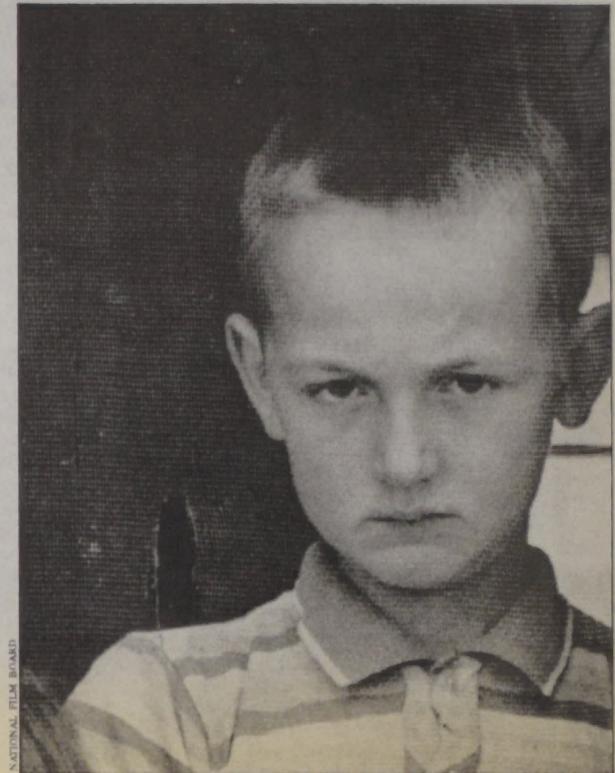
If ever I fell in love again, I told myself, I would always attempt to share from my deepest feelings; always voice my love; and never let a day go by when I did not show my adoration. I, at my death, would be remembered as a man who loved without measure, gave without concern, and spoke only words of encouragement to all who came his way.

It is difficult to write or even discuss marriage in this day and time. For a great many men and women, the mere word conjures up both their greatest hope and greatest disappointment. Divorce has ripped apart the very concept of "till death do us part." And sadly, even Christians fill the dockets of local divorce courts, demanding their piece of human justice, while at the same moment praying that almighty God does not execute his justice upon them.

The result: a community of broken people, the walking wounded, the injured for whom there is no sick-bed or nurse; the desperate for whom there is no hand to comfort; the true and the faithful from whom almost all have turned away.

A state of ecstasy

One day in the early 1970s, during a car ride to the Georgia border, I festered over my situation at home. My marriage was falling apart, my job strangling me, and I was unsure what to do next. My thoughts wandered to the man called Jesus. Did he even exist?



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I asked out loud, "If you're really out there would you show yourself to me?" What happened next, I have never been fully able to explain.

In the blink of an eye I became aware of the presence of someone else in the car with me. I drove on for the next hour in a state of ecstasy. I felt as though blinders had been lifted from my eyes.

In the days that followed I was crazed. I took hold of and read every book I could find that spoke of this man named Jesus. In a matter of days, the Savior moved, for me, off the pages of historical literature to redirect the course of my life forever.

Where was God?

Six years went by. It was 1981. My wife, daughter and I lived in a small house in Ponte Vedra Beach. Things seemed pleasant enough — the usual struggles. But the hammer was about to fall.

My wife left for a 10-day business trip to North Carolina and I was, as always, entranced by my sweet daughter as she played happily in the crib. At the end of the 10 days, my wife returned a different person. Days later, the confession came: she had been having an affair with her boss for some time.

I was destroyed. She packed some things and left the house, leaving our daughter to me. Over the next month I would

experience a pain so deep that I have not fully recovered from it to this day. She asked for a divorce sometime later. I was denied the custody of our daughter and had to move out of the house. Where, I thought, was the wonderful God who had shown his face so gently to me.

Alone again, sitting in a small apartment, I began to sort out the twisted pieces of my life. I had always sought love in the wrong places: in the bars, in the arms of women, in the deeds of life. Now, facing rejection as searing as I'd ever known, I would finally find the love I had sought since the beginning.

But it was not where I thought it would be. I found that real love is found on the face of the carpenter from Nazareth.

There, and only there, was — and is — the true love for which human hearts have cried out from the beginning. The search which had consumed my entire life had finally found its culmination.

In his very humanness was where he met me; as I had been, so too was he rejected; as I had been abandoned, so too was he. And as I had been, so too was he left to die. I knew without doubt that from that moment forward, nothing would ever be the same.

Thomas Lile has written his personal observations over a period of 15 years. He lives in Jacksonville, Fla.

Psychology

Therapy helps victims to trust again

Healing from abuse, and the controversy re: recovery therapy (2)

Harry Van Belle

In my article in the last issue of CC, I considered the nature and consequences of the various forms of abuse. Now we take a look at how abuse victims manage to recover, we will review the controversy that has arisen regarding "abuse recovery therapy."

I can only say with certainty that what follows applies to sexual and physical abuse. I do not know whether it applies to emotional and spiritual abuse also.

In her book, *Trauma and Recovery*, Judith Herman has neatly summarized the consequences of abuse into three symptoms, those of "hyper-arousal, intrusion and constriction."



Harry Van Belle

"Hyper-arousal" means that the bodies of abuse victims are perpetually on the alert for danger. Abused people are never at ease. Someone has aptly stated that their bodies show a kind of "frozen watchfulness." This is the condition we identified in the previous article as an inability to trust.

"Intrusion" is the condition in which abuse victims are fixated on the traumatic memory of the abuse. This means that they are compelled to relive the abuse over and over. Abuse victims are driven repeatedly to re-enact the abuse scene. As a consequence, they have to live in perpetual, inescapable, unbearable emotional pain.

To escape this pain their whole lives become focused on blotting the memory of the abuse out of their awareness. They usually succeed in doing this, but only at the cost of

severely "constricting" their lives. The final consequence of abuse for its victims is, therefore, a lifestyle that is oriented toward keeping knowledge of the abuse out of their awareness at all cost.

Safe recall

Herman's formulation allows us to explain what procedures abuse victims must follow to recover from their abuse: they must undergo a process of recalling and reliving the painful memories they denied so strenuously; they must do this in the presence of, and with the help of a skilled and trustworthy individual or group of individuals, usually therapists or fellow abuse survivors.

Earlier we identified the central negative consequence for abuse victims a loss of the capacity to trust. For reasons we partially described above, and on which we will elaborate in the third article, abuse victims are deeply convinced that it is not safe to talk about, to remember, or to relive the abuse experience in the presence of another human being.

But in abuse recovery therapy, they are helped to feel safe enough to do just that, enabling them to be relieved of their traumatic symptoms. Essentially, abuse recovery therapy is the process by which abuse victims are helped to regain their capacity to trust.

False memories induced?

Recently a controversy has arisen about some of the techniques used by abuse recovery therapists. Therapeutic techniques such as hypnosis, imaging, dream interpretation, journal writing, age regression, body work, group therapy and others are designed to aid the recall and re-experience of traumatic memories.

However, some people allege that these techniques do not help clients to recover memories of real abuse. Instead, they are said to induce false memories of

abuse into the people who come for therapy.

Instead of remembering the abuse that really happened but which had subsequently been forgotten, say critics, what happens as a result of undergoing abuse recovery therapy is that people end up believing that they were abused when in fact they never were. This, some people allege, happens especially with dominant, forceful therapists who are dealing with highly suggestible clients.

Thus, the alleged victims of abuse falsely accuse innocent people of abusing them, even to the point of sending them to jail for a crime they never committed. For these reasons recovery therapy is said to be a dangerous practice that should be discontinued.

Denying repression

In addition to being opposed to abuse recovery therapy these critics also hold to two contradictory views on memory. In the first place, they doubt whether people can actually blot a traumatic memory from their consciousness in order to rid themselves of the emotional pain.

They deny the possibility of motivated, purposeful forgetting, which clinicians call repression or dissociation. They claim that memories of traumatic events are so strong that they are impossible to forget.

Consequently, they hold that when someone claims to have forgotten a traumatic event and claims to have subsequently recovered the memory of that event in therapy, that person is in error. She has not forgotten or remembered anything, but in the course of therapy she actually has fabricated a false, illusory memory of an event that never happened.

Furthermore, according to recovery therapy critics, false memories are easily created in therapy because memory is highly susceptible to suggestion. Studies have shown that it is possible under certain experimental conditions to implant false memories into a person's consciousness — memories of an event that never happened — totally convincing the person



To recover from their abuse, abuse victims can undergo a process of recalling and reliving the painful memories they denied so strenuously; in the presence of, and with the help of therapists or fellow abuse survivors.

that the event did happen.

In my view, critics of recovery therapy hold to two contradictory beliefs about memory: that memories are so strong they are impossible to forget; that memory is so weak that it is constantly falsified and therefore cannot be a reliable guide to what actually happened to us in the past.

By means of these assumptions about memory, critics of recovery therapy try to back up their allegations that recovery therapists induce false memories of abuse into their clients

Same traumatic effects

These allegations are serious, and I believe some form of rebuttal to these claims is in order.

In the first place, abuse recovery therapy and the techniques it uses are apparently controversial only when applied to cases of sexual victimization. Why is that?

The same therapeutic approach and the same therapeutic techniques are applied to soldiers suffering from violent war experiences, to victims of natural disasters or severe accidents and to Holocaust survivors. Yet no one argues seriously that these therapeutic techniques should not be applied to these trauma victims.

Soldiers who have suffered violent war experiences, victims of natural disasters, and Holocaust survivors suffer the same symptoms of hyper-arousal,

intrusion and constriction as abuse survivors do.

All of them remember the traumatic events they experienced only too well, at first, but then manage to ease the pain by forgetting the events. And only in therapy do they manage to recall and relive the painful memories.

Yet the critics of recovery therapy question only the authenticity of the memories of sexual abuse survivors and not of the others. Why?

I leave this question for the reader to answer and wish to restrict myself to statements of fact. The fact is that a number of professional organizations have warned against the careless use of abuse recovery techniques. With this I concur without reservation.

But the fact is also that the allegations that recovery therapists induce false memories of sexual abuse into their clients by means of certain dangerous techniques are just that — allegations. And they are false. There are no studies that I know of which demonstrate that recovery therapists cause their clients to fabricate false memories of being sexually abused.

Until these studies exist, recovery therapists stand falsely accused.

Harry Van Belle is a therapist and teaches psychology at The King's University College in Edmonton, Alta.

Cyber-love for Christians

Giselle Aguiar

Somewhere, out there.... A tune for singles; somewhere out there my soulmate is waiting for me. The Internet may have become the superhighway of love where people find future spouses, but where does the Christian single find someone with similar beliefs? Well, one place would be a Christian-based dating service such as Christian Singles OnLine (CSOL).

I know, I've been there and tried everything. In my 20s it was the bar scene. In my 30s, I tried a computerized dating service, but they ignored my Christian beliefs. Then I realized the place to look was in church, but the youngest eligible bachelor over 18 was in his 70s. There had to be a better way!

With urging from my pastor, a friend and I started a singles social group between our two churches. No matter what the event, I noticed the main goal of participants was seeking potential mates.

Around that time, I got my first computer. It was the latest then — 66MHz, 4 MB of RAM, 540MB hard drive and the fastest modem, 14.4MHz. Anxiously, I got on America



CSOL's first wedding: bride and groom Leslie and Walter Berry, with CSOL owner Giselle Aguiar, in Sunnyvale, CA, Mar 31, 1996.

Online and discovered the world of cyberspace.

Then it hit me: why not use the Internet to help Christian singles find each other? Other services on the net were secular, with perhaps a small place for religion. But in my application, people are encouraged to enter their denomination and that of the person they seek. I started with an introductory rate of \$10.

Says James of Atascadero, California, "I thought it would be fun to meet people via e-mail, along with the possibility of

meeting the right person. It cost only \$10 for 10 matches — where could I go wrong?" Through CSOL, James met Candy of Redmond, Washington. They married in August 1997 and live in California.

Computer matchmaking

CSOL's main function is matchmaking — running members' criteria through the database, looking for matches based on compatibility. As an added feature for members with Internet access, I offer a

newsletter and browsing the profiles. When a non-computerized member comes up, we use postal ("snail") mail.

In 1995, CSOL's membership reflected the net's demographics: 80 per cent male, the majority between 35 and 45, with incomes around \$60,000. Now, it's 55 per cent male and 45 per cent female.

Your own web page

With web marketing and publicity, I soon had a good base of members. I raised the membership fee to \$39.95 for six months. Recently, I decided, as a better marketing strategy, charge a one-time fee. Now, for \$39.95, members have their own web page with optional picture, can browse the profiles and use the service for as long as needed.

CSOL's three years of matchmaking have provided an interesting study of what diverse Christian men and women consider important in potential mates. Most men want younger women. The dilemma is that most younger women don't care for men more than five years their senior. Men usually miss out on a five-year age bracket that is most compatible.

Smokers have a problem.

Only one-seventh of the members stated that smoking was not an issue. Social drinking is more acceptable, with half of the members saying that it didn't matter.

When it comes to denominations, about half will accept a person of any church. But devout Catholics prefer Catholics. And mainline Protestants prefer to stay mainline, though some will go non-denominational. As for those who define themselves as "born again," they generally will specify an evangelical believer.

The Internet has brought new meaning to long-distance relationships. Take the first wedding brought about by CSOL. Leslie lived near San Francisco; Walter in Milwaukee. He moved to California and I attended their wedding. It is an awesome feeling to know that I had a hand in changing two lives.

The second couple: Sheri was from Virginia and Bob from Ohio. She relocated to Ohio.

Charles and Amy were the first elopement. He's from Sunnyvale, Calif., and went just beyond the state border to find love. "This service and the grace of God have both Amy and me on cloud nine," said Charles. "We never thought our true soul mate was really out there and through a miracle we found each other. Who would have known that the perfect woman was waiting for me in Tillamook, Oregon?"

We've had the first international couple. Joel is from Switzerland; Ordela from Malaysia; and they now live in England.

The ninth couple represent New York and New Jersey. They exchanged vows on September 27, 1998.

The latest engagement was that of our tenth couple, who hail from Maryland and Pennsylvania. They'll be married near Philadelphia in May 1999.

So whether it's across town, in the next state, across the country or on the other side of the globe, if it's God's will, you'll find that person.

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Giselle Aguiar, who says she's still single, is owner and head cupid of Christian Singles Online. She is a graphic artist and website designer, and a member of the United Church of Christ in Melbourne, Florida.

OCTOBER 9, 1998

Education**Miscellaneous****Pedagogeries**

Alyce Oosterhuis

Apple pie therapy

Teaching is one of those professions in which one can be consumed by job interests far beyond the allotted teaching times. Although one may actually teach only from 9 to 4, many after-hour activities revolve around teaching.

As the teacher listens to the news, that which piques his or her interest is what can be applied to the following day's lesson. And whatever he or she reads, whether in books or magazines, is often filed away for future teaching references. Teachers often recount dreaming about their students, or about a disastrous lesson. And as the teacher drives to school in the morning, he or she may be a road hazard because attention is focused more on the coming day's events than the driving task at hand.

Experience doesn't lessen the extent to which teachers are immersed in their profession. Sometimes, experience only serves to increase the demands of the job. This is why I welcome the offer of apples every fall from a colleague of mine. Normally a non-baker, I struggle to create apple pies from these apples, which provide me with a welcome relief from my teaching preoccupations.

Welcome distraction

Since these apple pies represent the total baking I do in a school year, their creation forces me to attend to details which drown out the clamor of teaching voices. As I core and peel the pounds of apples I have to concentrate on not slicing my fingers.

As I cut the shortening into the flour I worry about whether it has finally reached the consistency of corn meal. And as I roll out the pastry I agonize over the globs of dough that won't adhere to each other but stick to my rolling pin instead. The fun part consists of taking golden, steaming pies out of the oven, resulting in delicious smells permeating the house.

Making apple pies is a therapeutic exercise for me because it forces me to lay aside all questions of lectures, assignments, student participation, advising and meetings. And at the end of the evening I can enjoy a product I have made that does not ask for anything but to be eaten.

Therapy or labor?

Every professional requires a time to set aside for leisure activities that allow the forgetting of all-consuming tasks. Thanksgiving celebrations can be such activities, provided they are diversions for all the professionals involved.

Unfortunately for the professional homemaker, baking apple pies and roasting turkeys are not diversions, but necessary components of the day's activities. In other words, one person's therapy is another's labor.

Recognizing that for many people the labor of homemaking requires no therapeutic diversion, I do wonder whether our Thanksgiving dinners could be organized to be celebrative leisurely activities for everyone gathered around the dinner table. Maybe we could eat less, or have family potlucks, or let those who find cooking and baking to be a therapeutic diversion take charge for the day.

In our household, my husband enjoys the hobby of cooking so that Thanksgiving Day will find him in the kitchen basting, roasting, stirring and tasting before serving his favorite dishes to the lonely and far-from-home students he has invited to share our dinner. And at the conclusion of the meal, those students and all of us profit from my therapy as we consume the last of my apple pies. We are still looking for someone who finds cleaning-up to be a wonderful and relaxing therapeutic diversion!

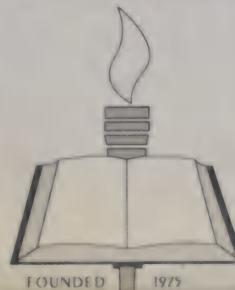
Alyce Horzelenberg Oosterhuis teaches education and psychology at the King's University College; her husband, Tom, is the Christian Reformed chaplain at the University of Alberta.

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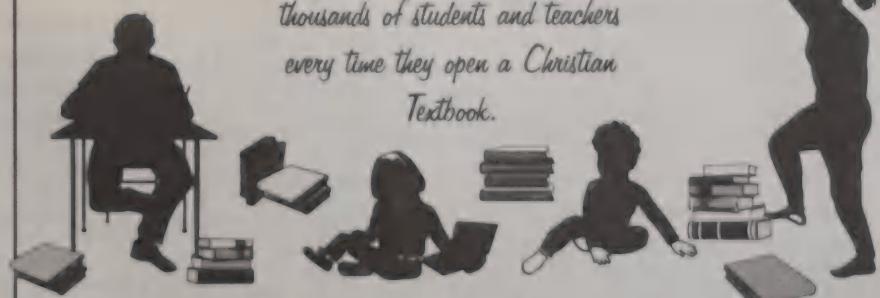


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Comment

'Downsizing' your personal stuff

Dear Mary,

Dr. Kilbourne, my first-year history professor, once mused something like this: "They say that we're a materialistic age. I beg to differ. Material does not matter to us. We do not rejoice seeing a well-built highway following the contours of the land and enabling us to reach many destinations. Instead, we speed to leave it behind as fast as we can, and curse it when faced with construction detours."

I've often thought about what he said. Especially during the last few weeks. Johanna and I have moved once more. For the second time in five years we moved from large to small, first from a four-bedroom house with a double garage to a three-bedroom one with a single; then recently, to an apartment. Now we have no private garage; no basement, either; small closets, and no linen closet, we discovered on arrival.

So once more we were faced with getting rid of stuff. Clothes, books, trinkets, works of art, furniture, files of correspondence. Faced also with deciding what we need most — and value most. And, wry experience, knowing (already) that some of what we shall keep will remained unused, perhaps even untouched, until our next move.

Clearly, this is a time to think about matters, to be "materialists"; a time to celebrate matter: wood, steel, paper, ink, paint, plastic, computer chips. Our possessions are us.

You want to know who I am? First realize that I live with Johanna, my wife of 40 years, and then look around our condo.

The goods in it are hers as they are mine. Then see our furniture. See the books, the art on our walls, the contents of our filing cabinet, the CDs now neatly stacked in a brand-new Ikea CD tower. Some of all that is more easily linked to one or the other off us as individuals, but most of it represents the endless series of compromises and accommodations that characterize a lengthy marriage, one buffeted, perhaps, but still intact, thanks be to God.

So as we sorted, retained and discarded much matter, Johanna and I were actually reflecting on who we are, singly and together. Some stuff we did not get rid of four years ago, we now let go. For we have changed. Shifted attentions. Abandoned interests. Wrote "The End" to old chapters in our life, and began new ones.

Compromises and accommodations. Not only with one another, but also with the amount of living and storage space available to us; with limits on how much we could spend on new stuff; with the reality of being active members in various communities: extended families, church, friends, interests; and now also with the other tenants and owners in the condo building who would like us to keep the noise down and the cooking smells agreeable.

We learned that while the goods we own are important to us, no goods we own own us. We learned once again (no surprise to you, I trust) that some of our decisions caused pain in others, and hence pain within us. And as we now discarded stuff we could not let go of four years ago, so we expect to be able to discard in the future goods we now cannot.

We learned the blessings of being able to choose this process rather than having it foisted on us by ill health and extreme old age that compels us to a nursing home or chronic hospital bed. (But having reflected on our experience, we may have also learned to face such a future move with a measure of peace and contentment!)

We learned once more what really is important to us: not the goods themselves, but what these are enabling us to lend in service to one another and to our larger communities.

I look forward to you and Bob visiting us soon. Have a look around our new digs. Rejoice with us about those matters that clearly enhance our lives. Gently comfort us when you see matters that betray the dark sides of our lives. Find some way to draw our attention to matters that may tempt us to materialize sin and evil.

Once more thing: this is definitely, positively, absolutely the last time I'll move myself rather than engaging a moving company. My body aches — keeps aching — from all the lifting and carrying I did. Ah well, it will remind me for a while that the few hundred dollars I saved ought to have mattered less. On the other hand, the experience also reminded me that the body matters, created, as it is, by God. I shall take some rest now for a while — and reflect some more on all that has happened in the past two months.

*Love,
Adrian*



Two
— over —
60

Dear Adrian,

Except for the aching back, what a lovely experience! One of those transition times when we are forced to take stock, prune, think about the past and about what we are likely to need for the future as we envision it. Isn't it wonderful how we need less for the journey — at least less of things that can be moved or counted or stored? And as you say, what a blessing to be able to do that together and in health.

Bob and I haven't faced "downsizing" yet. I sometimes shudder to think of what a job it will be. But as we age, we discover that 24 years ago we moved into the perfect retirement home. A condominium on the 19th floor means no yard work, no snow shoveling, and no steps to climb. So some of the reasons older folks are forced to move don't apply to us yet. And we enjoy our freedom to lock the door and go away for periods of time without having to worry about security.

There is also the difference in our personalities. Bob is a saver, I'm a discarding. You mention the compromises and accommodations of a lengthy marriage, and that area is one of ours. Besides, I grew up in a parsonage, and although my parents didn't move that often, my mother was always conscious of the fact that they had no abiding city. So she never got into either acquiring or saving a lot of things.

"Things" may be of much or little or no value, but they do serve as markers, don't they? I might not be aware of the fact that I had totally lost interest in a certain subject unless I had to decide whether to keep or throw out a book about it. Somehow a "thing" can symbolize a piece of our lives in a way that nothing else does.

After a year of marriage during which Bob finished graduate school we moved to Washington, D.C. We were able to put everything we owned into our old Chevy. We started out light, with a whole future ahead of us. When I stop to think about it, what a lot of "stuff" has been acquired, discarded, broken, given away, saved, lived with and treasured — or simply lived with! And yet I would like to think that our "stuff" has never been of primary importance, but has enabled both of us to reach out and serve the larger community as well as to enjoy a comfortable home. I think I can honestly say that our "stuff" has served us rather than the other way around. I'm really grateful for that.

We wish you and Johanna many years of enjoying the freedom that comes with having less baggage!

*Warmly,
Mary*

Adrian Peetoom is a retired educational editor who lives in Waterloo, Ont. Mary Vander Venne is a retired therapist who lives in Toronto.

News Comment

Two weeks that were

Bert Hielema

LAST WEEK WE (my wife and I) did something different. Because of poor TV reception — basically only one news channel — we had a small satellite dish installed. Yes, we now have access to CNN, Newsworld and uncounted other sources which pump out world happenings 24 hours a day. No, don't worry. I have not become a couch potato. I haven't changed my viewing habits much because I have no great interest in sports or comedy or films, and the only programs that can hold my attention for more than a few minutes are such well crafted newscasts as the PBS News Hour with Jim Lehrer.

Forgive me, but somehow TV brings the worst out in me: I am starting to loath Jean Chretien's crooked talk; I can't stand to see the face of Bill Clinton anymore and (I guess I am a man of very strong feelings) I deeply dislike [Ontario premier] Mike Harris and his gang.

TELEVISION IS A curious medium: if there is a choice between showing a good discussion on a worthy topic or watching some devastation somewhere, the calamitous events always win. This, I think, gives people a sense of dread and foreboding. But that sense is not necessarily warranted, because in many ways the world is still better than portrayed on TV.

However, there is something I like: I must admit that I am a bit of a weather freak, and since the man who brings the local weather is quite witty, I often watch his comments at 6:15 p.m. And weather has been very much in the news lately because of water.

Water, it seems, is everywhere except in Canada, where fires have been more frequent. But China, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, the southern U.S., Mexico, and now Europe, all have been deluged with torrential rains.

Bangladesh is a real mess. It is slipping from its normal,

natural disaster-prone status to a huge human catastrophe, with more than 30 million people homeless and all the crops wiped out. Witness global warming at work. At the best of times Bangladeshis live at the edge of starvation. Now with more than half of the country under water, the stage is set for sickness and famine on a grand scale.

THE EFFECTS OF our careless living have also been felt in Mexico, where the poor Chiapas area has had eight days of downpours, and hundreds there, too, have drowned. China of course, had its share a few weeks ago; and now Europe is at the receiving end: the heaviest rainfall in 130 years has swept across Belgium and the Netherlands.

Perhaps I am a bit cynical here, but I cannot help compare these calamities to the rescue attempts of Flight 111 off Nova Scotia, which also is a watery undertaking. Here untold millions of dollars are spent to recover the remains of some 230 well-to-do people; and while the progress of that "rescue" is constantly on the front page the plight of the millions in Asia and Central America receives little news coverage and even less help. Are our priorities to the dead or to the living, I wonder?

NOW FOR SOMETHING different: A man who smelled like a distillery sat down on a subway seat next to a priest. The man's shirt was stained, his face covered with lipstick, and a half-empty bottle of booze was sticking out of his torn coat pocket. He opened his newspaper and started to read. After a while he turned to the priest and asked, "Father, do you know what causes arthritis?"

"Mister, it's caused by loose living, being with wicked women, and too much alcohol," answered the priest somewhat

self-righteously.

"Well, what do you know!" muttered the drunk, and went back to reading.

The priest, thinking about what he had said, and ashamed of his attitude, nudged the man and apologized. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to come on so strong. How long have you had arthritis?"

"Oh, I don't have it. Father. I was just reading that the Pope does."

THIS REMINDS ME of drinking. Water, that is. A recent University of California *Wellness Letter* had a section on water drinking. Here is something you'll like: drinking a cup of coffee does not result in a net loss of water. Compared to water, you retain half the fluid from the coffee or tea, which is a far cry from a loss.

We need a lot of water because blood is 83 per cent water, muscles are 76 per cent water, and even 22 per cent of bone is water. Water helps us digest food and excrete wastes; it cushions and lubricates brain and joint tissues. So drinking water is part of the job of living. On an average we need eight eight-ounce glasses of water a day, more when it is hot or with vigorous exercise.

However, we may take into account that many foods are mainly water: fruits, greens and soup, of course. It is a good thing to drink a couple of glasses of water in the morning, since our body has had no fluids for many hours at that point. It also relieves constipation. If we eat more fibre-fruits and grains, we need to take in more fluids as well. More water may also ward off kidney stones and prevent urinary tract infections.

THE BIGGEST THREAT to world prosperity is deflation, which began in Japan and has spread almost everywhere since.

Even prices of new cars are coming down, for the first time since the Depression. Deflation even warranted an editorial in the *Globe and Mail*. It is a condition in which the value of such things as real estate and stocks falls in relation to the value of debt. For example: Say your house, and that of many people like you, is now worth \$100,000 and you have a \$60,000 mortgage. Your house value declines to \$70,000 but your mortgage remains the same. The result: bankruptcies, defaults, plant closures and foreclosures.

The Depression of the '30s was a classic case of deflation, with lower wages and lower prices. Actually, wages have already declined. Let's hope that the current Washington scene has no parallel with the Nixon

scandal, although the likelihood that we are entering an economic down period seems more and more evident.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont.

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| <p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>THE JJ SHOW Christian TV Entertainment</p> <p>Times: Vision TV Cable Network Thursday mornings 6:30 a.m. ET & PT 7:30 a.m. MT & AT Also CJIL-TV (The Miracle Channel) Lethbridge, Alberta 9:30 a.m. and a repeat in evening Sponsored by Voortman Cookies Web page: www.thejjshow.com</p> |  <p>The Living Word Sermons for reading services.</p> <p>CRC Contact: R. Vander Ploeg Secr./Treas. 37 Brick Pond Lane Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1 Phone: (519) 539-2117</p> |  <p>Congratulations to Joop and Elba Devoest on their 50th anniversary.</p> | |

Classifieds

| Obituaries | Job Opportunities | Personal | Events | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--------------------|---|----------------|--|------------------|--|-----------------|--|---|--|
| <p>Winterswijk Psalm 121 Clinton The Neth. Ont. Peacefully, in the Lord</p> <p>ANNA CHRISTINA KLOMPS (SIMMELINK)</p> <p>passed away on September 7, 1998.</p> <p>Anna Simmelink was born in Winterswijk, the Neth. on November 30, 1922. She married Gerhard W. Klomps (predeceased 1988) on July 13, 1948, and together they immigrated to Canada in August of 1948.</p> <p>Survived by her children: Bill & Nancy Klomps — Bayfield, Ont. Janet & Jake Peters — Clinton, Ont. Ann & John Reinink — Auburn, Ont. Sister of Dina & Andries vanOenen of Goderich, Wim & Jeanette Simmelink and Sina & Jan Onnink, all of the Netherlands. Also loved by 11 grandchildren.</p> <p>Anna Klomps was predeceased by two brothers, Jan and Ben Simmelink, and one sister, Mina vanOenen.</p> | <p>First Chr. Ref. Church of Barrie, Ont., is pleased to invite applications for the following positions: Music Director. This part-time position (approx. 15 hours per week) requires a motivated, competent musician who can organize and provide leadership through music in worship. Youth Director. This part-time position (approx. 25 hours per week) requires a person who has a clear sense of calling to minister to youth.</p> <p>An information package including complete job descriptions is available upon request. Application deadline is October 15, 1998. Please forward resumes and/or inquiries to: First Christian Reformed Church, Box 875, Barrie, ON L4M 4Y6, Attn. Caron Goodreau, phone: (705) 734-9166, fax: (705) 734-3785.</p> | <p>ONE TO ANOTHER Christian companion magazine. Hundreds of readers Canada-wide Single issue \$5. Write to: #12 923 2nd Ave. S. Lethbridge, AB T1J 0C7</p> <p>ADA REALTY LTD. 2011-137 Ave., Suite 404 Edmonton, AB T5A 4W2 (403) 473-8149 Sid Vandermeulen Contact us first when you think of moving to Edmonton and district. <i>Het vertrouwde adres.</i></p> | <p>Our Year of Jubilee <i>Maranatha Christian Reformed Church of St. Catharines, Ont., is celebrating '50 years of Chr. Ref. Presence in the Niagara Peninsula.' We are thankfully remembering the blessings we have received with a special Thanksgiving service, including celebrating the Lord's Supper, on Oct. 18, 1998, at 3:30 p.m. All former pastors, former members and friends are invited to celebrate with us on that date. For more info. call the church at (905) 934-0631; or (905) 937-0314.</i></p> | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Teachers</p> <p>HAMILTON, Ont.: Calvin Christian School will have a temporary teacher assistant position available beginning November 30, 1998. The position will be available due to a maternity leave request. The position involves assisting various faculty members and providing physical and health care for one of the students. For further information call the school at (905) 388-2645. Please submit your resume to the school by Monday, October 19, 1998.</p> <p>Send applications to: Calvin Christian School, 547 West Fifth St., Hamilton, ON L9C 3P7 Attention: Mr. Ted J. Postma, Principal or fax to: (905) 388-2769.</p> | <p>FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT</p> <p>Two Mechanics needed for busy lawn equipment/tractor dealership located in central Toronto. Experience is a must. Experience with farm tractors would be an asset. Some heavy lifting required. Must have a good attitude and be able to work independently. Interested in long-term commitment. Wage will depend on experience and qualifications. Benefits (Health and Dental). No Sunday work. Please fax resume or profile to: (416) 242-6710 anytime.</p> | | <p>ORGAN CONCERT / HYMN SING! <i>Improvisations on Well-known Hymns - Classics Performed By Renowned Dutch Organist Sander van Marion</i></p> <p>With Participation of ***** The Ottawa Carleton Male choir (Brockville - Ottawa - Kingston)</p> <p>***** Musicians - Brass</p> <table> <tbody> <tr> <td>BROCKVILLE:</td> <td>Thurs. Oct. 22, 1998 - 8 pm First Presbyterian Church</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OTTAWA:</td> <td>Fri. Oct. 23, 1998 - 8 pm St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church</td> </tr> <tr> <td>KINGSTON:</td> <td>Sat. Oct. 24, 1998 - 8 pm St. George's Cathedral</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TRENTON:</td> <td>Sun. Oct. 25, 1998 - 7:30 pm King Street United Church</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Admittance: Free-will Offering Concert Convenor: Cor Hoogeveen Ottawa (613) 224-1597</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | BROCKVILLE: | Thurs. Oct. 22, 1998 - 8 pm First Presbyterian Church | OTTAWA: | Fri. Oct. 23, 1998 - 8 pm St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church | KINGSTON: | Sat. Oct. 24, 1998 - 8 pm St. George's Cathedral | TRENTON: | Sun. Oct. 25, 1998 - 7:30 pm King Street United Church | Admittance: Free-will Offering Concert Convenor: Cor Hoogeveen Ottawa (613) 224-1597 | |
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| <p>OAKVILLE, Ont.: Oakville Christian School requires a teacher for a Senior Kindergarten maternity leave, February to June, 1999. Consider joining a team of caring and dedicated Christian educators. Send your resume, statement of faith and letter of application before November 1, to: Mr. Herb Goodhoofd, Principal, Oakville Christian School, 112 Third Line, Oakville, ON L6L 3Z6</p> | <p>CORNERSTONE BIBLE INSTITUTE</p> <p>Flute, Piano and Organ Benefit Concert</p> <p>Joining together to praise the Lord through music Featuring Marjolein de Wit (the Netherlands) Martin Zonnenberg (the Netherlands) Willem Van Suydam (Canada)</p> <p>Saturday, Oct. 24 at 8:00 p.m. Central Presbyterian Church, Queen's Square, Cambridge (Galt), Ont.</p> <p>All proceeds are for CornerStone Bible Institute which provides Evangelism and Discipleship for Canadian prisoners.</p> <p>Adults: \$12.00 — Youth (under 16): \$8.00 Tickets can be purchased at the door, or to reserve tickets send payment to: CornerStone Bible Institute, 425 Hespeler Rd., Suite #312, Cambridge, ON, N1R 8J6</p> <p>Annual Fundraising Dinner</p> <p><i>Come to hear from a man who spent 10 years in prison and now is a Seminary graduate and pastor of a Presbyterian Church</i></p> <p>Rev. Dion Marshall "Called Into His Marvelous Light"</p> <p>Friday, October 23, 1998 at 7:00 p.m. Community Christian Reformed Church, 1275 Bleams Rd., Kitchener, Ont.</p> <p>Contact CBI for your free admission: Phone (519) 650-0012</p> | <p>CHRISTIANS FOR ARMENIA</p> <p><i>"Who remembers Armenia?" said Adolf Hitler. God does! His Word must be brought to Armenians TODAY. Will you consider helping us to proclaim the Gospel, by means of broadcasting and the written word?</i></p> <p>Write to: Christians for Armenia 12233 S. 70th Ave., Palos Heights, IL 60463</p> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>LANGLEY, B.C.: Langley Christian High School requires a full-time Learning Assistance/Special Education Teacher, commencing January 4, 1999.</p> <p>Qualified applicants forward resume, references and statement of educational philosophy to: Peter Van Huizen, Principal, 22702 - 48 Ave., Langley, BC V2Z 2T6; phone (604) 533-0839, fax (604) 533-0842.</p> | <p>CORNERSTONE BIBLE INSTITUTE</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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Due to the retirement of our pastor, the Christian Reformed Church of **Prince George**, located in central British Columbia, Canada, is searching for a full-time pastor. Church profile available upon request.

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ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT (Executive Office)

The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) has a full-time opening for an **administrative assistant** in its **Burlington Executive Office**. The responsibilities include providing administrative assistance to Director of Canadian Ministries and other ministry staff, co-ordination and preparation of staff reports and meeting arrangements for the Canadian Ministries Board and committees, and preparation of meeting minutes.

Qualifications include a diploma with additional education, training and a minimum of 4 years' experience. The candidate has the ability to handle a broad range of administrative functions, and good oral and written communication skills. Experience in MicroSoft Word and Excel is essential. The person must have ability to work comfortably with diverse colleagues, outside associates, and the public. Organizing work-flow, setting priorities, and effectively managing one's own time is imperative.

A detailed job description is available upon request. For consideration, submit a copy of your resume or application by **October 16, 1998**.

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News

Nova Scotia artist to show raw images of suffering

Redeemer College focuses on Job

Valerie Walker

HALIFAX, N.S. — Nova Scotia artist Matth Cupido is presenting to Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ont., his latest exhibition, "Job: Companion of God." The exhibition, which began October 6 and runs through October 31, is comprised of 30 works, including paintings, woodcuts and three-dimensional pieces.



Matth Cupido

JOB
Companion
of
God

Matth Cupido's portrayal of Job.

In the exhibition's first week, the installation was enhanced by a monologue performed by Cupido himself in the campus theatre, The Black Box. In addition, a book on Job newly translated from the Dutch by Jack Van Meggelen, is available at the Redeemer bookstore.

Making sense of it

Working with themes from the book of Job has intrigued Cupido for many years. He finds the rich narrative and the vivid portrayal of humanity compelling, and he had already completed several Job-related pieces before the idea of a collection began to develop.

Cupido began work on the

series last year, but stopped because he had "a strong feeling that the imagery needed to be more raw." In planning the exhibition, he has confronted a palpable discomfort among Christians with Job's terrifying descent into apparent disfavor, and Job's struggle to make sense of it.

Cupido smiles as he recounts one concerned criticism: "But do you think your audience can handle it?" He is sure that they will survive the experience, but agrees that Job's story confronts us with mysterious and humbling realities about our relationship to our Creator. Fashioning artwork that brings Job's struggle to life is even more gut-wrenching.

"You have no idea how brave you have to be until you get going," says Cupido.

Job's cross

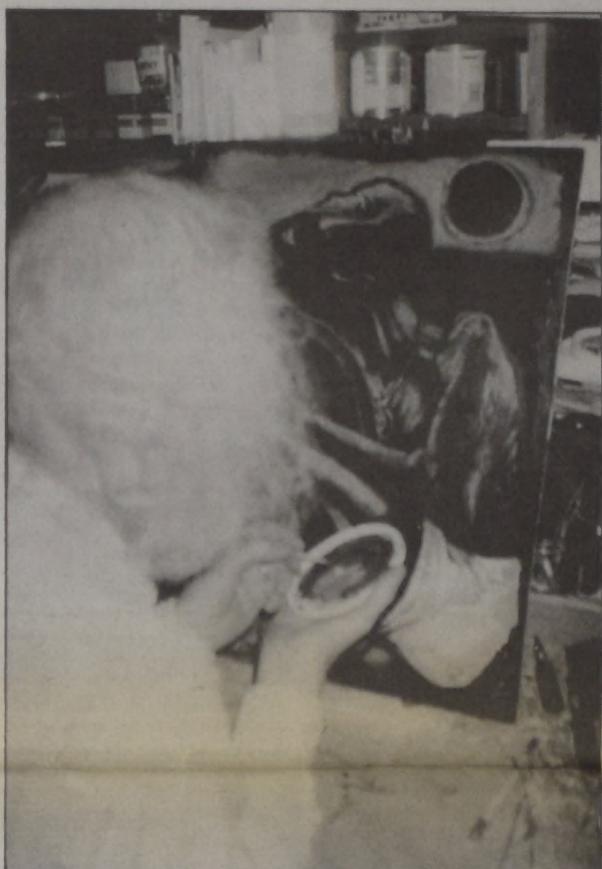
Being consumed by Job's story has resulted in Cupido having developed an intimate knowledge of the biblical narrative. Consequently, the words and word-pictures spill into his discussions of his art. Cupido feels he identifies with his subject's suffering and redemption.

It is no coincidence, then, that the anachronistic Christian symbol that frequently appears on a chain around Job's neck in Cupido's pieces is patterned after his favorite pendant. It is a fish and a cross, crafted by a Brazilian artisan from a Peruvian coin, and is, in this series, Cupido's presence within his own work.

This exhibition is the first of what Justin Cooper, president of

Redeemer, refers to as "powerful bookends" on either end of an artistically exciting year for the college. The second exhibition, *The Stations of the Cross*, will be mounted at the end of the academic year.

The student curator for the year is Amanda Wilms, assisted by Professor Betty Spackman. In



Matth Cupido at work in his studio.

the next months Matth Cupido will be at Redeemer as "artist-in-residence." Over the course of the year, Cupido will explore themes of joy and suffering with the art students at Redeemer, supplementing the work that Spackman will do as a part of the regular course offerings in fine arts.

Wide interest

While Redeemer does not have an ongoing artist-in-residence program, the college is open to the idea and has had an "opportunistic" approach to it, says Spackman. This has allowed the college to take advantage of available talent, and, in this case, a keen interest in having Cupido work with art students and educators at many levels.

Several interested parties are assisting in sponsoring the year-long residency, and will undoubtedly derive secondary benefits. The Ontario Christian Schools Teachers' Association (OCSTA) is one such co-sponsor. Cupido will be featured as a speaker at an upcoming teachers' convention, and will be available to speak to students at

Ontario Christian high schools through-out the school year.

Matth Cupido already knows what he wants to accomplish this year.

He hopes that the themes of joy and suffering will give students and himself something powerful with which to work over the year. He hopes to raise the profile of art within the college itself, and to boost Redeemer's profile within the community.

Cupido has a message for artistic high school students who may struggle with the idea of art as a vocation: "If you feel you have a gift and you want to do this, then it can be done." And then he wants to share a bit of his journey down the same road.

Thinkbit

"Mostly people change not because they see the light but because they feel the heat."

from: Fall 1995 issue of
Update

News Digest

Dead candidate runs for Senate

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Death has proved no obstacle for Jacquelyn Ledgerwood's campaign for the U.S. Senate. The 69-year-old homemaker died from a heart attack July 15, but managed to get enough votes in the Aug. 25 Democratic primary to advance to a two-person runoff for the nomination.

The way Oklahoma's attorney general reads the law, Ledgerwood's name must remain on the run-off ballot, and if she wins, she will be the party's Senate candidate in November.

Ledgerwood's family have stated: "Perhaps the achievement of Ledgerwood's purpose of spiritual renewal in running for the U.S. Senate is not dead and can still be attained with a win in the runoff and a miracle victory in the general election Nov. 3."

Americans 'becoming cultured'

A recent front-page *Wall Street Journal* feature by Douglas Blackmon makes the case that the United States is becoming more cultured. True, the piece admits, Wonder remains the biggest single selling bread brand, but the cultural common denominator is on the rise.

American book-buying is on a dizzying rise, more students are studying abroad, theatrical ticket sales are up, as is opera attendance, public radio stations have tripled since 1980, "and you can get cappuccino in Arkansas."

Sword-swaller marries wasp-tamer

CALGARY (CP) — The bride is a sword-swallowing, the groom tames wasps and the bridesmaid eats live bugs. It was a lovely wedding!

Megan Evans and Jim Rogers were married in front of 200 comedians and other performers at the Calgary Science Centre recently.

Evans, a member of the Virtual Insanity show, is Canada's only female sword-swallowing. Rogers is Calgary's Bee Man. "He goes out to where people are having problems with bees and he tames them with his bare hands," explains Brenda Fox, the bridesmaid, who performs in Evans' troupe by eating live maggots and worms.

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Chuck: (905) 646-0199
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